

Introduced by Senator Cox

February 27, 2009

An act to add Section 527.1 to the Water Code, relating to the South Tahoe Public Utilities District.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 672, as introduced, Cox. South Lake Tahoe Public Utilities District: water meters.

Existing law requires an urban water supplier to install water meters on all municipal and industrial service connections located within its service area on or before January 1, 2025. Existing law requires an urban water supplier to charge each customer that has a service connection for which a meter has been installed based on the actual volume of deliveries as measured by the water meter beginning on or before January 1, 2010.

This bill, with regard to the South Tahoe Public Utilities District, would extend that January 1, 2025, date to January 1, 2035, and that January 1, 2010, date to January 1, 2020. The bill would set forth related declarations and findings, including findings and declarations relating to the need for special legislation.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) The South Tahoe Public Utilities District currently has one
- 4 of the lowest per capita water usages in the State of California.

(b) The district has taken a number of steps to conserve water in its service area including all of the following:

(1) The district has implemented a water conservation rebate program for low-flow toilets, fixtures, dishwashers, tankless water heaters, and front loading washing machines.

(2) The district has a full-time water conservation specialist on staff.

(3) The district employs three full-time “water educators” during the summer months to educate district water customers and enforce the district’s water conservation program.

(4) The district has initiated a “turf buy-back” program that has resulted, to date, in the savings of one million gallons of water annually.

(c) Conserved water from the district does not flow into the California watershed.

(d) Due to grading requirements established by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, water meters may only be installed from May 2 to October 14 each year. This construction window is shorter than those in the rest of California and impacts the district’s ability to meet the current statutory metering deadline.

(e) Meeting the current statutory deadline is cost prohibitive due to a water main improvement project. The water main improvement project is necessary to protect the Tahoe National Forest from fire.

(f) Forest fire is a clear and present danger to the Lake Tahoe Basin. The Angora Fire of 2007 damaged property and the environment.

(g) Waterline retrofit is essential to forest protection and to protect Lake Tahoe’s clarity.

(h) The district has identified over 185,000 lineal feet of waterlines that cannot provide sufficient flows for fire suppression.

SEC. 2. Section 527.1 is added to the Water Code, to read:

527.1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the South Tahoe Public Utilities District shall do both of the following:

(a) Meet the requirements set forth in paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 527 on or before January 1, 2035.

(b) Meet the requirements set forth in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 527 on or before January 1, 2020.

1 SEC. 3. The Legislature finds and declares that this act, which
2 is applicable only to the South Lake Tahoe Public Utilities District,
3 is necessary because of the unique and special water problems in
4 the area included in that district. It is, therefore, hereby declared
5 that a general law within the meaning of Section 16 of Article IV
6 of the California Constitution cannot be made applicable to the
7 district and the enactment of this special law is necessary for the
8 conservation, development, control, and use of that water for the
9 public good.

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